

Hoss to seek Euro-Arab support

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss said Wednesday he would seek European and Arab support for his cabinet's drive to oust Christian General Michel Aoun. Hoss made the statement shortly before heading for Paris to attend a Euro-Arab conference which he said was expected to discuss the Lebanese problem. The conference, due to begin Thursday, was called by French President Francois Mitterrand and is expected to be attended by 12 European and 22 Arab foreign ministers. "I will ask for more international support to enable Lebanon to surpass the current state of partition which threatens its unity," Hoss said. Aoun, who is holding out in the country's Christian enclave, has refused to recognise President Elias Hrawi, elected last month, or the authority of his cabinet, headed by Hoss.

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Arafat: Jordan-PLO coordination, links at their highest level

By a Jordan Times Staff Writer with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian leaders held in-depth talks Wednesday on further coordination of policy and approach towards efforts for peace in the Middle East and American proposals for Israeli-Palestinian talks.

The level of understanding and coordination reached between the two sides was evident in remarks made by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in an interview with Jordan Television.

"Jordanian-Palestinian talks are not a matter of coordination but a collective Arab action on all levels," said Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and president of the State of Palestine. "I would like to express my profound gratitude for His Majesty King Hussein's brotherly, principled and committed position towards his kinfolk living in the occupied territories," he told Jordan Television.

Arafat, who arrived here Tues-

day and expected to leave later Wednesday, rejected Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's contention that Jordan was Palestine and recalled Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's remark that, along Shamir's contention, it will appear that Poland was the Israeli premier's homeland.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that Wednesday's discussions between Badran and Arafat — attended by senior officials from both sides — covered the current situation in the Middle East, the latest developments in the region as well as the international scene, and efforts to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

According to officials quoted by international agencies, the talks also dealt with American proposals for Israeli-Palestinian talks, the role of the PLO in any settlement and the future of Jordanian-Palestinian talks.

"Many crucial events are taking place regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict which need evaluation and a coordinated stand," said a senior Jordanian official quoted by Reuters.

Later, in comments made to reporters after the meeting with Badran, Arafat assailed Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin's threat that the property of parents of children demon-

strating in the uprising would be confiscated if they failed to pay Israeli-imposed fines.

"This is a funny and strange law," said Arafat. "I make a present of it to U.S. President George Bush, who talks about human rights everywhere except the Palestinian people's human rights. Now we have reached a stage where Palestinian children's rights are violated."

The PLO leader also criticised Shamir for what he described as Israeli attempts to exclude Jordan and the PLO from the peace process. "If Shamir thinks he is a political acrobat who can cover the light of the sun with his hands, he is dreaming," Arafat said. "We are the difficult number in the equation in the Middle East. And those who don't like this, can head out to the Dead Sea or the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea and drink until they are full."

The recent superpower summit held in Malta did not give enough attention to the Middle East conflict, Arafat conceded. But he pointed out the issue was the only subject discussed between Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev other than bilateral agreements at the summit.

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Israeli soldiers carry the body of a Palestinian found dead in the Arab Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabal Mukaber.

U.S. troops, PDF locked in battle

Noriega ousted but in hiding

PANAMA CITY (Agencies) — Thousands of U.S. troops supported by helicopters and armoured vehicles attacked Panamanian military bases throughout the country Wednesday in a bid to apprehend General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Noriega, the Panama Defence Forces (PDF) chief who has been indicted in the United States on drug charges, was in hiding.

Machine-gun and cannon fire echoed across the capital through the night. One hospital reported 50 dead and hundreds wounded, but a doctor there said the toll was rising rapidly and medical supplies were short.

The Panama Canal was closed by the fighting, and a security guard said oil pipelines through the canal zone were not operating because employees failed to arrive for work. U.S. officials said they expected the pipelines to reopen Thursday.

Opposition leader Guillermo Endara, the perceived winner of elections last May later nullified by the Noriega-controlled government, was sworn in as president and said U.S. forces were in control of most Panamanian military bases. It was unclear if Endara had the support of any military units.

U.S. President George Bush said on national television that

some U.S. and Panamanian civilians died in the fighting, which began about midnight (0500 GMT).

"The operation is not over yet," Bush said. "General Noriega is in hiding."

Bush said he was forced to intervene militarily because Noriega's "reckless actions" had endangered the lives of some 35,000 U.S. citizens in Panama.

"I took this action only after reaching the conclusion that every other avenue was closed and that the lives of American citizens were in grave danger," he said.

Although initial Defence Department counts recorded at least nine American soldiers killed in the fighting and 39 wounded, Bush said he was pleased that most of U.S. objectives had been achieved and organised resistance had virtually ceased.

At a news conference, Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the United States had made a "fugitive" of Noriega. He vowed to catch the Panamanian, who had thumbed his nose at several U.S. attempts to remove him from power.

"He (Noriega) is not running anything. We own all the bases. We have cut off the head of that government," Powell declared.

"We will chase him and we will find him."

He said 7,000 crack combat troops were airlifted to Panama for the assault. About 13,000 soldiers were already based in Panama to protect the U.S.-built canal.

Bush also announced the removal of economic sanctions imposed in an effort to topple Noriega, whose removal has been sought since his indictment on drug charges in Florida in February 1988.

The president said the operation was triggered by the killing of an American soldier by Panamanian forces and the wounding and beating of others last weekend.

"That was enough," Bush said. "General Noriega's reckless threats and attacks on Americans in Panama created an imminent danger to 35,000 Americans in Panama."

The White House said Bush had been in contact with Moscow and allied leaders by personal telephone calls and diplomatic cables. It did not disclose the contents of his messages.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher offered strong support.

Moscow already has denounced the U.S. action and called for immediate withdrawal.

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Upto 2,000 reported killed in demonstration

Romanian forces on full alert as protests continue

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Romanian forces went on full alert Wednesday and anti-government protests, in which up to 2,000 people may have been killed at the weekend, continued in several towns, the Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said.

"It is only seemingly quiet in Bucharest, where young men with full knapsacks, most likely recruits, are to be seen at railway stations," it said.

Tanjung said the Romanian press had kept silent on Sunday's protests against the hardline President Nicolae Ceausescu in towns of Timisoara and Arad, but that the public has been informed by watching foreign television programmes.

"The state of full alert has been declared across Romania as protests and unrest continue," it said.

Signalling Kremlin displeasure at the behaviour of Romania's hardline leadership, Soviet newspapers Wednesday reported the demonstrations and continuing tension in the country.

The Soviet media gave details of the bloody suppression of protests in Timisoara and signs Moscow may break its long silence on Ceausescu's resistance to reforms sweeping Eastern

Europe.

The government newspaper Izvestia also appeared to mock the official Romanian media for ignoring the clashes and concentrating instead on Ceausescu's visit to Iran and the "Labour success of the Romanian working people."

Mihai Munteanu, a deputy from Soviet Moldavia which borders Romania, told reporters he had been told Wednesday that protests were continuing in several cities and criticised the government for violating human rights.

"I spoke to people across Romania by telephone this morning. Demonstrations are continuing across the country, including the cities of Iasi and Arad," said Munteanu, an opera singer who frequently performs in Romania.

There was still no official Kremlin reaction to events in Romania, apart from remarks by Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Brussels Tuesday. He expressed concern over reports of "unpleasant things" that had happened in Romania.

Ceausescu returned to the country Wednesday after a three-day visit to Iran, the official Agencepres news agency reported.

Bucharest airport by government officials and politburo members and his wife Elena.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn said several hundred people had been killed and wounded in Timisoara when police and troops attacked demonstrators.

Horn told parliament that, according to "credible information," security forces and soldiers had turned guns and tanks on a crowd of several thousand people.

"They acted very brutally against the demonstrators, shot into the crowd. There were several hundred dead and wounded, according to credible information," Horn said.

"These acts are not only contrary to all international norms, they are inhuman," the minister said.

Pope John Paul condemned the killing of demonstrators in Romania, saying he had heard the news with deep sorrow.

In an unusually strong statement at the end of his Wednesday weekly audience in the Vatican, the pontiff said: "We have all learnt of the news of deaths and injuries in several Romanian cities with deep sorrow."

London announces Hong Kong rights

LONDON (R) — Britain said Wednesday it will grant full citizenship to 50,000 key Hong Kong residents and their families, giving a total of about 225,000 Hong Kong Chinese the right to settle in the country. Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told parliament full British passports, immediately valid, would be issued to 50,000 "heads of households" in the run-up to the colony's handover to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. The heavily-awaited nationality package was provided to the colony by Britain after the Chinese army crushed pro-democracy student demonstrations in Peking last June, torpedoing hopes for a smooth transfer of power to the Chinese.

About 2.25 million of Hong Kong's 5.7 million people hold British passports, but the documents give them no right to live in Britain and China's repatriation of the demonstrators started an emigration flood. The opposition Labour Party attacked the proposals as "elitist and discriminatory" and said they would not be honoured by any future Labour government. A former Chairman of the ruling Conservative Party, Norman Tebbit, also signalled right-wing dissent among government supporters for different reasons.

Palestinian said tortured to death

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian has died in the interrogation centre of an Israeli prison, senior sources reported Wednesday, and the man's family said he had been tortured to death.

A lawyer for the Gaza City family of Khalid Kamal Al Sheikh Ali, 27, told Reuters the family believed security forces had tortured him to death in Gaza Prison Tuesday night.

There was no immediate official comment.

Israel Radio reported that the family would be able to name someone to represent them at the autopsy.

Palestinians said it was the fourth time an inmate had died at the prison in the two-year-old uprising in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Gaza residents said Ali was arrested 13 days ago during a curfew. He died in an interrogation room used by undercover officers of Israel's Shin Bet, accused by Palestinians of torturing prisoners.

Israel Radio, quoting Palestinians, said he was active in the Islamic Jihad organisation.

Nationalist leaders in Bethlehem said Wednesday Christmas would be a day of mourning in honour of the hundreds of Palestinians killed in the uprising.

A leaflet signed by the unified national leadership in the town said for the third Christmas of the uprising residents of Jesus' traditional birthplace would demonstrate no joy.

"We will show the world looking to our country on the third Christmas of our uprising... that the day of Christmas will be a day of mourning for the souls of our martyrs," the leaflet said.

It appealed to the faithful to pray for the dead, to receive spiritual leaders in churches and not in the streets, to visit families of the dead, wounded and detained, and to refrain from decorating shops.

"If a parent does not appear before the responsible officer or does not pay the bail to release his child... it will be possible to confiscate that parent's property," an army communique said.

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Arabs and Europeans see Paris talks as symbol of enduring ties

TUNIS (R) — Beyond trade and technology, Palestine and petrochemicals, Arab and European foreign ministers will see the Euro-Arab dialogue which opens in Paris Thursday to be the visible symbol of an enduring relationship.

President Francois Mitterrand of France has invited the 34 ministers — 12 from the European Community and 22 from the Arab League states — to Paris to revive a process which had lost its way in bureaucratic details and political misunderstandings.

When the partners in the dialogue last met in 1983, they failed to produce a joint declaration because of a perennial imbalance between political demands by the Arabs and the less coherent position of the Europeans, diplomats said.

"The French are picking up the whole process and relaunching it through this grand meeting... It's an important symbolic chance to affirm the strength of the relationship," said a European Ambassador in Tunis, the Arab League headquarters.

"Everyone will say what's on his mind. We don't expect any concrete results. But the meeting will make it possible to give a psychological boost to a dialogue which has sunk into routine and

was dozing off dangerously," Hamadi Essid, the Arab League representative in Paris, told Reuters.

"It's the spirit that counts most... but it will definitely be a first step towards more fruitful cooperation in the future," said an Arab ambassador.

The Arab League has been pressing the Europeans for a new session of the dialogue since at least 1986 but attempts to draft a joint statement in advance continued to pose problems.

League Secretary General Chadli Klibi, a keen advocate of the dialogue, brought it up again when he saw Mitterrand in October and a few days later the French president took other EC members by surprise by announcing the meeting for December.

Diplomats said Mitterrand, partly for reasons of national prestige, wanted to ensure the dialogue resumed before France hands over the EC presidency to Ireland on Jan. 1.

Only Libya and Syria objected

to the idea because of the diplomatic sanctions which the EC imposed on them in 1986 for their alleged role in acts of violence.

Libya at first said it would boycott any Arab state that took part in the meeting. It began to back down after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak had a word with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and Monday it said it would take part.

The French Foreign Ministry said Tuesday the Syrian and Libyan Foreign Ministers, Farouq Al-Shara and Jaddallah Azzouz Al-Talhi, were expected in Paris. Shara was in Tripoli Tuesday, apparently for last-minute consultations.

Libya and Syria are bound to bring the sanctions up in Paris but will probably fail to make it a central issue. "There's no disposition to make this a Libyan meeting, except on the part of the Libyans," the European ambassador said.

Arab League officials said France's presidency and developments in the Middle East peace process over the past year had helped break the deadlock in the dialogue.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), a full Arab League member, is a welcome

participant after renouncing terrorism and recognising Israel's right to exist last year. It is sending Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi to the meeting.

Egypt, the most populous Arab state, resumed its place in the Arab League in May after 10 years in the wilderness.

Hamadi Essid said the two sides were practically in agreement on how the dialogue should now proceed but European diplomats said this was far from the case.

The Arab League wants the 34 foreign ministers to meet regularly, at least every other year, and expand the troika of foreign ministers to a group with seven or eight ministers from each side, officials said.

The three-man troika groups the foreign ministers of the former, the current and future president of the community.

"In general, the Europeans are not interested in creating a gigantic machinery which turns out paper and does not function," one European diplomat said.

"We regard constitutions, minutes and draft communiques as a positive nuisance. We don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past 12 years," said another.

Israel worried by Iraqi missile development

TEL AVIV (R) — Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin voiced alarm Wednesday at Iraq's development of a long-range missile capability and said Israel would have to take "the appropriate decision."

Angelo Gnadinger, the Middle East chief of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ended his visit after five days of talks in the Iraqi capital.

He had held similar meetings in Tehran with Iranian officials last week, seeking the repatriation of some 1,000 wounded and ailing prisoners held by both sides.

Gnadinger refused to comment to reporters before his departure on the outcome of his visit.

But Andreas Wigger, the ICRC's chief delegate in Baghdad, said: "I may say nothing concrete has been achieved..."

"The defence establishment is keeping a close watch on... developments in Iraq in various technological areas, especially Iraq's progress in developing medium- and long-range ground-to-ground missiles, its entry into space and the development of non-conventional weapons," he said.

"Our monitoring is aimed at enabling the government to take the appropriate decision in the light of these developments in every sphere of confrontation..." Rabin said.

Western military analysts quoted by a British newspaper said the Iraqi missile did not achieve all its goals.

The analysts quoted by the Guardian Monday said the missile, named Al Aabid (the warrior), flew for only 130 seconds and reached an altitude of just 20 kilometres.

Israel bombed a nuclear reactor under construction in Baghdad in 1981 because it believed the plant would be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Rabin said Iraq had made several major strides in military technology during the 1981-83 Gulf war against Iran.

"The government of Iraq has adopted an order of national priorities which channels enormous resources into research, development and production of the most advanced weapons, which are likely to equip Iraq with a long-range capability," he said.

Foreign experts say Israel has itself developed medium-range missiles which could hit Iraq and possesses a nuclear and chemical weapons capability.

ICRC fails in Gulf PoW swap bid

BAGHDAD (AP) — A senior Red Cross official flew to Geneva Wednesday after failing to arrange an immediate swap of ailing and wounded prisoners still held by Iran and Iraq more than a year after the Gulf war cease-fire.

Angelo Gnadinger, the Middle East chief of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) ended his visit after five days of talks in the Iraqi capital.

He had held similar meetings in Tehran with Iranian officials last week, seeking the repatriation of some 1,000 wounded and ailing prisoners held by both sides.

Gnadinger refused to comment to reporters before his departure on the outcome of his visit.

But Andreas Wigger, the ICRC's chief delegate in Baghdad, said: "I may say nothing concrete has been achieved..."

"This is a long process which needs more effort," Wigger said. Gnadinger had hoped for an immediate release of the sick and wounded as a first step toward settling the issue of the Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war under Article 118 of the Third Geneva Convention. The article calls for repatriation of PoWs immediately after the cessation of hostilities in wars.

The ICRC has registered some 50,000 prisoners held by Iran and more than 19,500 in Iraqi camps. Many of the PoWs have been held since the early stages of the war that broke out in September 1980.

However, diplomats and United Nations officials say the two sides hold 100,000 PoWs between them.

Last year, Iran and Iraq released about 400 sick and wounded prisoners. But the operation was stopped with both sides accusing each other of falsifying the number of captives seeking asylum.

Earlier this week, hopes were raised that an agreement for a prisoner swap was imminent. Akram Al Witri, chief of the Legal Department at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, said Baghdad had responded positively to an ICRC call to this effect.

But Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati quickly reiterated the Iranian position, underlining the effort. Tehran has insisted it will not agree to swap the prisoners or implement any other peace move with Iraq until Iraqi troops withdraw from chunks of land they occupied in the final weeks of the Gulf war.

Oil tanker blocking Suez Canal refloated

SUEZ (R) — An oil tanker which had been blocking the Suez Canal after it ran aground in a narrow stretch of the waterway was refloated Wednesday.

Witnesses said seven tugs refloated the Liberian-registered tanker, the Lauberhorn, at around 1230 GMT as the tide began to rise. It will be towed towards Suez.

At least 17 ships had been waiting at the southern entrance to the canal since the tanker ran aground late Tuesday, shipping company officials said.

The accident had temporarily closed both of the world's major canals to shipping, following a U.S. decision to close the Panama Canal Wednesday because of fighting in the Latin American country.

The Lauberhorn's Greek owners, Base Shipping Service Network, told Reuters 1,500 tonnes of oil leaked from the tanker Tuesday and one of the ship's holds was cracked. There were no signs of oil slicks on the canal.

They said the ship had run aground because of poor visibility. The Suez Canal authority was seeking \$5 million in initial damages, they added.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS BRIEFS

Body of SLA militiaman found in lake

RASHAYA, Lebanon (AP) — The gunshot body of a militiaman with the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) was found Wednesday in a lake in Israel's self-proclaimed security zone in South Lebanon. Voice of the South, a radio station controlled by the SLA militia said Ali Qassem was driving his car through the border village of Aitaroun late Tuesday night when three shots rang out in the region. The body and the car were found in the lake the following morning, it said, giving no other details.

Israeli MP predicts release of airman

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli airman missing in Lebanon since 1986 is being held there by Iranian forces, and Israeli legislators predict progress soon towards his release, the commander of Israel's air force has said. Israel Radio quoted unidentified Israeli parliamentarians as saying the Jewish state was willing to "talk and deal" for his release and that progress could be expected in "two or three weeks." Israeli air force commander Major-General Avihai Ben-Nun, as saying that navigator Ron Arad was held captive by Iranian fighters in Lebanon and assumed to be in good health.

Europe urged to stand up to Israel

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria Wednesday urged Europe to have the courage to stand up to Israel and back the Arab World in Middle East peace efforts ahead of a Euro-Arab conference in Paris. The official Tishreen newspaper said the meeting of foreign ministers from the 12-nation European Community and 22-nation Arab League, due to open Thursday, offered Europe a chance to understand Arab causes. The conference is being held to breathe new life into dialogue between Western Europe and the Middle East. Tishreen accused the Europeans of "not being courageous to express their real views against Israel, which occupies Arab lands and practices repressive measures against Palestinians. What we get from Europe amounts to nothing more than verbal condemnations, statements and shy regrets. Europe has not taken any effective action to prevent Israel's racial crimes," it said.

Kabul wary after coup plot revealed

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Afghanistan's ruling Communists have increased security around the president's palace in Kabul after discovering a coup plot early this month, Western diplomats have said.

"Rumours of involvement of high-level figures and of greater numbers arrested are circulating (in Kabul)," said a Western diplomat, who refused to be identified.

Meanwhile, the leader of the powerful rebel group Hezb-I-Islami claimed another, unconnected coup plot was being hatched in Kabul. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar said the second coup plot involved government troops, but he

would not elaborate.

"We are working on a plan to successfully stage a coup," the charismatic leader told a news conference Tuesday in Peshawar, bordering war-torn Afghanistan.

Hekmatyar also claimed that his organisation had infiltrated Afghanistan's armed forces.

"We have created several cells within the army and no one knows about the other," he said. Hekmatyar claimed that a "Revolutionary Council" would step into the vacuum caused by a successful coup and within six months elections would be held.

Afghanistan's official Radio Kabul reported on Dec. 5 that government troops had crushed

an underground guerrilla network operating in Kabul, arresting 100 people. The radio made no mention of a coup plot, but said those arrested belonged to Hekmatyar's group. Hekmatyar denied they were his men.

More recently, diplomatic sources have said Afghanistan's State Security Minister Ayubi claimed to have jailed 127 people in connection with the alleged coup plot.

Since the alleged plot surfaced, diplomats said there have been a series of purges within Afghanistan's armed forces. Most of those being expelled belong to the Khalq, faction of the ruling Communist Party, diplomats said.

U.S. urges Sudan to stop executions

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States has been urging Sudan to repeal death sentences imposed on a man convicted of black market dealings and on a doctor accused of leading a strike, an official has said.

U.S. diplomats have been discussing the case with Sudan's government following the recent executions of two other Sudanese, one convicted of currency violations and the other of drug dealing.

The death sentences for these two men "were vastly out of proportion" to their crimes, especially because they were tried by a special court without full judicial protection, said a department official who could not be named in keeping with department regulations.

"We urge the government of Sudan not to impose the death sentences on the two prisoners remaining," the official said.

"We have discussed these cases with the government of Sudan in private diplomatic channels and we continue to do so," the official said.

Sudan has been under military rule since a June 30 coup which overthrew the government. U.S. law mandates cutting off aid to countries whose democratic governments have been overthrown, but the administration has withheld such action in hopes the new rulers would act to resolve the country's civil war.

However, a report issued last week by Amnesty International said murder and torture continue in Sudan since the military takeover. Also, talks earlier this month between the Khartoum government and the rebels fighting for autonomy in the south of Sudan broke down.

Sudanese army troops killed 17 southern rebels during raids on nine camps belonging to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the armed forces daily reported Wednesday.

U.S. distances itself from Israeli oil deal with Iran

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has distanced itself from a reported Israeli oil deal with Iran which has prompted comparisons with a U.S. arms-for-hostages scandal.

State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler Tuesday confirmed a U.S. television report that the deal had taken place but denied that Washington had any advance knowledge or had given its blessing, either before or after the fact.

"Israel informed us a month ago after the fact that it had concluded a deal with Iran for purchase of Iranian oil. Foreign countries do not seek U.S. approval for oil purchases from a third country," Tutwiler said.

Iran, in a statement issued at the United Nations, said it denied the report as baseless and an attempt "to distort the revolutionary image of the Islamic Republic of Iran amongst the Muslim nations throughout the world."

Iran said it took special care in requiring its purchasers that its oil not go to Israel or South Africa.

Israel declined comment. "We don't comment on oil deals of the Israeli government," said Yossi Olmert, head of the government press office.

Monday's television report said the oil purchase was part of a bid to win freedom for Israeli prisoners of war and possibly Western hostages held in Lebanon.

The NBC network, quoting U.S. intelligence sources, said Israel had paid \$36 million for two million barrels of Iranian oil offloaded in Eilat in mid-November.

Reports of the deal seemed likely to provoke controversy in the United States, where memories of the Iran-contra scandal which soured the second term of former President Ronald Reagan are still fresh.

The scandal, the worst of Reagan's presidency, involved a scheme in which arms were secretly shipped to Iran in an attempt to win freedom for U.S. hostages. Profits from the arms sales were diverted to Nicaragua's contra rebels.

From Israel's point of view, the reported oil deal was the latest in a long series of attempts to forge a relationship with Tehran, despite the fervently anti-Zionist rhetoric of its Islamic rulers who constantly preach a "holy war" to liberate Jerusalem from Jewish control.

Iran was a key Israeli ally and its main source of oil before the

fall of the shah.

The United States quashed suggestions that it was seeking to bargain for the freedom of its hostages.

"We will not make deals for hostages or reward terrorists," Tutwiler said.

But reports of the deal appeared likely to prompt questions about how much control the United States could or should exert over the actions of an ally such as Israel to which it gave \$3 billion a year in foreign aid.

According to some sources, Israel had informed Washington about the deal only after U.S. intelligence uncovered the basic facts. But Tutwiler denied this, saying the Israeli disclosure had not been prompted by the United States.

"I don't want to get into the specifics of where the meeting was, (but) yes, we were told," she said.

NBC said Iran was interested in buying spare parts from Israel for military equipment originally bought in the West.

Tutwiler said U.S. law barred the transfer of equipment of U.S. origin without U.S. approval. "Israel is well aware of this requirement and has told us they will abide by it," she said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:45 Programme review
16:00 Children programme
17:10 Book of Adventure
18:00 News for the Deaf
18:20 Religious programme
19:00 Health programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Local series
21:30 Programme review
21:40 Local programme
22:20 Arabic film
23:00 News in Arabic

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Le Monde Est A Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Aujourd'hui en France
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:40 Varieties
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Guinness Record
21:10 The Return of Sherlock Holmes
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature film: "Street of Dreams"

PRAYER TIMES

05:03 Fajr
06:25 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:33 Dhuhur
14:17 'Asr
16:40 Maghreb
18:03 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich

Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711531.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 627981, 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817 and 649932.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

There will be a drop in temperatures and a rise in humidity. Clouds will appear at different altitudes and winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and calm seas.

Min./max. temp. 5/12
Aqaba 8/21
Deserts 2/15
Jordan Valley 9/19

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 28 per

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Amjad Nawras 781806
Dr. Hazim Mansour 740733
Dr. Mohammad Al Abbadi 778959
Dr. Saad Abu Hatab 649846
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nauoukh pharmacy 623672
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 644945
Simcikim pharmacy 637660

IRBID:

Dr. Ali Al Omani (—)
Al Sharaa' pharmacy (985238)

ZARQA:

Dr. Youssef Abu Sa'id (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 603041
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 243402
Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department

630521
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 642462
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
Company 08-53200
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Jabal Amman Maternity 636140
Mafes, J. Amman 666176/7
Palestine, Shamsi 664171/4
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musassir Hospital 667271/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666176/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Mohajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775112/6

Army, Marks

Queen Alia Hospital 891611/15
Amal Hospital 622405/0
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)755555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Dr. Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (09)5320-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
05:00 Damascus (RJ)
05:15 Amman (RJ)
05:20 New Delhi (RJ)
05:30 Cairo (RJ)
05:45 Cairo (RJ)
06:00 Kuwait (RJ)
06:15 Dhahran, Kuwait (RJ)
06:30 London (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:10 Amman (RJ)
10:00 Baghdad (RJ)
10:10 Riyadh (SV)
10:20 Bahrain, Kuwait (GF)
10:30 Muscat, Oman (GF)
10:40 Aqaba, Jordan (JK)
10:50 Damascus, Syria (EK)
11:00 Cairo (MS)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:10 Amman (RJ)
10:00 Baghdad (RJ)
10:10 Riyadh (SV)
10:20 Bahrain, Kuwait (GF)
10:30 Muscat, Oman (GF)
10:40 Aqaba, Jordan (JK)
10:50 Damascus, Syria (EK)
11:00 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Amman (RJ)
07:15 Amman (RJ)
07:30 London (RJ)
07:45 Paris (RJ)
08:00 Amman (RJ)
08:15 Amman (RJ)
08:30 Amman (RJ)
08:45 Amman (RJ)
09:00 Amman (RJ)

FOR FRIDAY

21:15 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:00 Damascus, Syria (EK)
10:00 Frankfurt (LH)
10:10 Baghdad (LA)
10:20 Riyadh (SV)
10:30 Bahrain, Kuwait (GF)
10:40 Muscat, Oman (GF)
10:50 Aqaba, Jordan (JK)
11:00 Damascus, Syria (EK)
11:10 Cairo (MS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 420 / 380
Banana 450 / 400
Banana (Mekmama) 400 / 350
Beans 300 / 250
Cabbage 120 / 80
Carrot 200 / 140
Cauliflower 200 / 140
Cauliflower (large) 220

35 ladies graduate from UNICEF course

AMMAN (J.T.) — A two month training course on nutrition education and growth monitoring of children under five years of age ended here Wednesday with the graduation of 35 participants at a ceremony held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath.

The regional office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sponsored the course in cooperation with the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA), according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Sina Hikmat from the association paid tribute to UNICEF for its help in providing training to local Jordanian women in means of caring for their children, Petra said.

UNICEF's Regional Director Richard Reid said there was need for holding similar training courses to help mothers bring up healthy children.

UNICEF initially conducted a study on children's nutrition in Jordan in cooperation with the Ministry of Health. The study highlighted the need to promote awareness of mothers regarding proper feeding and weaning of infants.

Princess Sarvath later offered the premises of the Princess Sarvath College in Amman for training.



Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Wednesday presents a certificate to one of the participants in the two-month UNICEF course on nutrition education and growth monitoring of children. (Petra photo)

Specialists in nutrition from UNICEF, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) and the Ministry of Health conducted the course, according to Petra.

It said that the participating women heard lectures on child nutrition and the basic food elements essential for building the body of children and the most proper means of providing food for children throughout the different stages of their development.

According to Petra, UNICEF,

over the past two decades, initiated and funded several health and public information programmes designed to improve the well-being of children, their health environment and their mothers.

Jordan has made significant strides and achievements in reducing and almost eliminating infant mortality through cost effective health policies such as immunisation, oral rehydration therapy and breast feeding program-

mes, according to a UNICEF press release.

It said that UNICEF recently published its 1990 "state of the world's children report" which puts Jordan in the forefront of countries that have led the world in applying health policies capable of eliminating infant mortality and improving children's general health and well-being.

Among those attending the ceremony were Health Minister Addoub Al Zaben and senior Ministry of Health officials.

Yarmouk deans discuss student clashes

IRBID (J.T.) — Deans of Yarmouk University faculties organised a meeting Wednesday to discuss implications of the recent events which involved clashes among various groups at the university campus.

Among the speakers was Dr. Khaled Al Omari, dean of the Student Affairs Department, who appealed for national unity and announced that the clashes will not deter the university from organising ceremonies and other religious and national celebrations.

Clashes took place following an exhibition organised by the university displaying various features of the on-going Palestinian intifada.

Thirteen students were involved in the clashes inside and outside the campus. They were detained and later released.

The clashes were discussed by Parliament last week and a special parliamentary committee was formed to investigate the events.

The incident, Omari noted, marred the university's image. He said that a committee set up by the university to investigate the clashes will pursue its work, and penalties will be imposed on the violators of the university's laws and regulations.

Omari announced the creation of a special student committee to help maintain order and propose suggestions that would prevent a recurrence of such incidents.

Tawjihi exams on Dec. 24

AMMAN (J.T.) — A total of 66,302 students will take the first session of the General Secondary Certificate Examination, Tawjihi, which starts in Jordan Sunday, Dec. 24, 1989, according to an announcement by the Ministry of Education Wednesday.

It said that the students will be sitting for examinations in scientific, literary, commercial, agricultural, hotel management, nursing and industrial fields in 857 examination halls.

The ministry has made preparations for teachers to supervise the examination session and to mark the papers. Normally the Ministry of Education organises a second examination session for Tawjihi students in June each year, but as of the 1992/1993 scholastic year Tawjihi examinations will be taken in one session at the end of the scholastic year.



His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday receives the credentials of the new Algerian ambassador. King receives credentials of 6 envoys

AMMAN (J.T.) — Six newly appointed ambassadors to Jordan Wednesday presented their credentials to His Majesty King Hussein at separate ceremonies held at the Royal Court in the presence of senior court officials. The ambassadors were: Mohammad Kharrabi of Algeria, Johan Ballegeer of Belgium, Dino Scioli of Switzerland, Francesco Dovale of Portugal, Ahmed Abdullah Mohammad of Somalia and Ahmed Bakkar Sidi Mukhtar Kuntah of Mali.

Present at the ceremonies were Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker, King Hussein's political advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ibn Zaid and Acting Foreign Minister and Minister of Information Ibrahim Izzeddin. Earlier Wednesday, the ambassadors of Portugal, Somalia and Mali handed copies of their credentials to Izzeddin as non-resident ambassadors to Jordan.

ACC labour ministers begin third meeting in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ministers of Labour in the four-member Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) countries opened their third meeting in Amman Wednesday to discuss social security issues pertaining to workers from the four ACC countries.

Minister of Labour Qasem Ubeidat opened the sessions with an address voicing Jordan's call on Iraq, North Yemen and Egypt, Jordan's partners in the ACC, to implement an agreement reached by the four countries in September.

Jordan proposes to the ACC members to put into force the provisions of the agreement which calls for organising the

employment and transportation of manpower within the ACC states, Ubeidat said.

The agreement signed by the ACC labour ministers in September of this year is bound to contribute positively towards full integration of the four countries, and fulfil the goals of the ACC charter.

The implementation of the agreement, Ubeidat added, will be a translation of the directives of the ACC heads of state who called for increased efforts to improve workers' conditions, ensure their social security and vocational training.

The ACC heads of state decided on such measures at their Alexandria meeting last June.

and the Arab labour ministers had met to discuss labour affairs in Baghdad and Cairo in August and October 1989 respectively.

The minister reviewed in his speech the various items on the agenda of the two-day meeting, referring in particular to the idea of setting up a data bank on the labour market in the ACC states, programmes for training and legislations which cover social security for workers.

Later Wednesday, the ministers and their aides held the first meeting during which they reviewed the implementation of the meetings and a number of working papers prepared by technical committees.

Jordan honours charitable societies

AMMAN (Petra) — Voluntary and Charitable Societies in the Kingdom were honoured Wednesday at a ceremony held on the occasion of the International Volunteer Day, an annual event organised in Jordan by the Ministry of Social Development.

Minister of Social Development Abdul Majid Shreideh distributed awards and shields to the heads of the organisations at the ceremony, and delivered a speech, paying tribute to their role in promoting social development in Jordan.

Shreideh also referred to the close cooperation between the Ministry of Social Development and the various organisations to carry out different projects benefiting the handicapped and the needy.

He referred in particular to the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAF) and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) among others as organisations that have been instrumental in social and voluntary work in the country.

"The Ministry of Social Development is in the process of issuing a law for the welfare of the handicapped, which will hopefully come into force at the start of the new year," the minister noted.

He said that the law will provide equal opportunities for the handicapped people in employment.

General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) President Abdullah Al Khatib addressed

the ceremony, outlining the voluntary service in Jordan.

GUVS "directs attention to the needy people and seeks to improve the living conditions of poor sectors of the society," Khatib said.

He said this work is being implemented through the help of 450 charitable organisations operating in the Kingdom employing 45,000 volunteers.

Khatib also presented a review of the GUVS work in various regions including vocational training programmes and child care training courses.

Another speaker was Fakhr Bilbeisi, president of the GUVS branch in the Amman Governorate, who outlined the branch's activities.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

PRINCE MOHAMMAD VISITS NMI: His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Wednesday visited the National Medical Institution (NMI) and was briefed on its achievements and future plans. (Petra)

PEOPLE'S ARMY: A batch of People's Army recruits graduated Wednesday at a ceremony held at the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company complex near Karak. The recruits, who underwent a three month training course in first aid and the use of light arms, were all from the southern regions of Jordan, around Karak. The group included a large number of officials and employees from the Ghor Al Safi and Mazzraa regions. Before receiving their diplomas the graduates presented a performance of their skills such as dismantling and re-assembling light arms. Several awards were presented to those excelling in their training courses.

FAJIR RECEIVES SPANISH ENVOY: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr. Ali Al Faqir Wednesday discussed with Spanish Ambassador to Jordan Ramon Armengod means to bolster bilateral and cultural relations. (Petra)

AL AQSA RESTORATION COMMITTEE: Al Aqsa Restoration Committee held a meeting Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Mohammad Mheilan. The discussions dealt with the measures necessary to carry out the project related to restoration of the Haram Al Sharif. (Petra)

DRIVERS LICENCE: Motorists who lose their driving licence can apply for a replacement and will be issued new ones immediately upon filling a form at the concerned department, according to a statement by Public Security Department (PSD) Director General Fadel Ali Fuheid. But the PSD chief noted that the form contains a pledge that the applicants should return the old licence when and if it was found later. (Petra)

AOAS MEETING ENDS: Arab specialists ended a three-day meeting at the Amman-based Arab Organisation of Administrative Sciences (AOAS) during which they reviewed means of promoting Arab countries' exports. The delegates, representing six Arab countries reviewed working papers presented by the Arab Monetary Fund and the Council of Arab Economic Unity. (Petra)

ARBOR DAY IN TAFLEH: Tafleh Governorate announced Wednesday that it will hold Arbor Day celebrations in the coming month. Governor Khalaf Mahameh announced after a meeting that fruit and forest trees will be planted in great numbers within the governorate and along main roads in a bid to fight off the encroachment of the desert over arable land. (Petra)

ARAB POLICE DAY: Irbid Police Department held a ceremony Wednesday on the Arab Police Day anniversary. Governor Jawdat Sbihi was among dignitaries who delivered a speech on the occasion paying tribute to the police force for its efforts to ensure security.

GHALEB HALASEH LAID TO REST: A funeral was held in Amman for the late Ghaaleb Halaseh, the Jordanian writer and intellectual who died of a heart attack in Damascus. Minister of Culture Khaled Al Karaki took part in the funeral which was attended by Jordanian intellectuals and writers. Halaseh died at the age of 53. (Petra)

TRAINING COURSE: Five employees from the Arab Company for Drug Industries and Medical Appliances (ACDIMA) Wednesday enrolled in a specialised training course on word processor systems. The five-day course is designed to introduce the participants to the use of word processors as well as means to retrieve and print information. (Petra)

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE: Participants in a pan-Arab symposium on the role of primary health care in addressing the problems of narcotics called for funding off dangers resulting from drug addiction, and for providing specialised treatment centres in each Arab country. (Petra)

JORDAN ATTENDS BAGHDAD TALKS: Jordan took part in the meetings of experts in the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) ministries of economy, trade and supply which started in Baghdad Tuesday. Jordan's delegation to the meetings is headed by Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Al Saqqaf. (Petra)

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- * An exhibition of paintings and etchings inspired by Arabic Islamic art at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
- * An art exhibition by artists from Jordan and other Arab countries at Al Wasiti Gallery, Plaza Hotel.
- * A photography exhibition on French poet de Prevert at the French Cultural Centre.
- * The youths art exhibition at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- * Contemporary Islamic fine arts exhibition by Ahsan Nahla at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- * An exhibition entitled "The Blue Rider" at the Yarmouk University.
- * A plastic art exhibition by Arij Al Hamad and Ibrahim Nabahneh at the University of Jordan.
- * An exhibition on public education at the Soviet Cultural Centre.

FILM

- * A Soviet film entitled the Fate of a Human at the Soviet Cultural Centre — 5:30 p.m.

Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

Meanwhile, a close Arafat advisor criticised a planned Washington meeting of the foreign ministers of Egypt, the United States and Israel and said the PLO was not bound by anything they decide.

Bassam Abu Sharif told reporters: "This tripite meeting does not concern us... it's not a binding meeting since the PLO is not part of it."

"We're only concerned with meetings that we attend and participate in," he stressed.

Abu Sharif said the proposed Washington meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the foreign ministers of Egypt and Israel was "aimed at discussing technicalities and modalities of the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue in Cairo."

The Washington meeting is part of a U.S. plan initiated by Baker to pave the way for peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Those talks would be hosted by Cairo and Baker has proposed that the meeting focus on Shamir's election plan for the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Abu Sharif said that the PLO was "ready at any time to talk to the Israelis... and we're waiting for a date to be set for the Cairo meeting."

Panama

(Continued from page 1)

The United Nations Security Council scheduled a special session on the Panama situation and Colombia called for talks among the foreign ministers of seven Latin American countries.

Initial reaction from U.S. lawmakers was positive, both among Republicans and Democrats. Noriega's main bodyguard, Asuncion Gaitan, spoke on the national radio network after dawn to say Noriega was "well and in a safe place."

"Don't anyone give up your positions. In the provinces, prepare to resist. The attacks are going to continue when they find we are not going to cede," he said.

A man identified only as Major Caballero said on national radio that Panamanian forces had detained 40 U.S. citizens. There was no elaboration and no further details were available. He earlier said 41 U.S. citizens were held.

Also, troops who said they are Noriega loyalists seized three U.S. citizens from a hotel in the capital.

By dawn a pall of smoke covered the capital. Fighting continued in old Panama and San Miguelito, two districts of the capital where Noriega's paramilitary units are strongest.

Helicopters by the dozen crossed the sky, flying in and out of U.S. bases. Fighting also was reported at a Panamanian military base in the centre of David, 320 kilometres west of Panama City.

The PDF have an estimated 15,000 troops. Noriega also has armed citizen "dignity battalions" of his loyalists, many of whom come from working class neighbourhoods.

Noriega's whereabouts were unknown and Major Edgardo Lopez, head of the PDF press office, said Noriega had received warning of the attack.

"General Noriega is in another part of the country and is on top of the situation," Lopez said in an interview with a Mexican television network.

Ministry to establish farmers federation

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Agriculture plans to carry out programmes contained in the government policy statement to parliament and will embark on steps to establish the Jordanian Farmers Association to help carry out these programmes. Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabiyat said in a statement Wednesday.

A draft law on the projected federation will be first submitted to the Higher Agricultural Council at the Ministry of Agriculture before constitutional steps can be taken for the creation of the federation, the minister said at a meeting attended by members of the board of directors of the Jordan Valley Farmers Association.

Arabiyyat said that the problem of debts on farmers in the Jordan Valley will be resolved through increased development in their region to raise their income.

The association President, Talal Al Ghizawi, told the minister about the main problems encountered by the association noting that they mainly include marketing issues especially of onions, garlic and potatoes. He added that the high price of agricultural inputs makes marketing even more difficult.

UNDP to train sign language interpreters

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is undertaking a project to train sign language interpreters for the deaf in Jordan, and specialists who the organisation has brought to the Kingdom for the purpose, say that the project could be initiated as early as the summer of 1990.

A statement by the Health Ministry here Wednesday said that two specialists from the Lamar University, Beaumont, in the American State of Texas, have been invited by (UNDP) to study the feasibility of initiating the training and certification programme for sign language interpreters for the deaf.

Their visit was coordinated by Manal Hamzeh, director of the Health Ministry-affiliated Speech and Hearing Centre in Amman.

Hamzeh said that the centre was encouraged to make the move in view of the success achieved by a 15-minute news programme on Jordan Television.

January 1990 marks the first anniversary of the weekly programme, interpreted for the deaf by Hind Abed Rabbo, the first qualified interpreter for the deaf in the country, who presents the programme with the assistance of her deaf brother Sabri.

The programme has been highly successful and was received enthusiastically by both hearing and deaf viewers, according to Hamzeh.

She said deaf children in Jordanian schools report they are watching the sign language broadcasts with interest and learning more about regional, national and international developments.

According to the statement the two specialists invited by UNDP to Jordan are Dr. Jean Andrews and Dr. Robert Moulton who train teachers of the deaf at Lamar University.

Both specialists visited the National Speech and Hearing Centre, Al Raja School for the Deaf, Jordan Club for the Deaf, Queen Alia School for the Deaf, Queen Alia Speech and Hearing Centre, the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt, and Al Amal School for the Deaf at Qweismeh.

They have spent many hours interacting with speech pathologists, audiologists, teachers and administrators at the schools for the deaf, deaf adults, deaf children and parents of deaf children, discussing education and rehabilitation services in Jordan.

Dr. Andrews has recently published a textbook, the Psychology of Deafness with the psychologist, Dr. McCay Vernon who is internationally recognised for his work in mental illness, psychodiagnostics, test development and neuropsychology with deaf and hard-of-hearing persons.

She said that the research of Dr. Vernon and others indicate that intelligence in the deaf population is normally distributed.

Andrews said that sign language is a highly developed and complex linguistic system. "One only needs to spend 15 minutes

with a deaf adult at the Jordan Deaf Club, or a student at one of the schools for the deaf; and with the aid of an interpreter, fluent in Jordanian sign language, one quickly realises that many deaf people have the same intelligence, ambitions, curiosity and desire like other normal people."

Andrews added.

Dr. Moulton, who has already initiated and established sign language deaf education programmes in China, Central America and

Mexico, said he hopes that the UNDP-sponsored training programme for sign language interpreters can be initiated here in the summer of 1990. He reported that there are individual with signing skills already in Amman who, he said, can benefit from additional training in the procedures and ethics of interpreting as well as receiving information about the psychology and socio-linguistic consideration of the adult deaf community.

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Ministry of Public Works and Housing
Government Tenders Directorate
Invitation for Tender No. 51/89/Central

The Water Authority of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation issues Addendum No. 1 to Tender No. 51/89/Central (request for proposals for upgrading and expansion of As Samra Waste Stabilisation Pond System).

ADDENDUM NO. 1
The qualification of the Jordanian engineering consultant outlined in lines 10, 11, 12 and 13 of page 1 of the RFP is changed to read as in para 1 and 2 below:

1. "The qualifications of the Jordanian consultant shall include being listed as grade (company) in the fields of water and sewerage, electrical, mechanical, roads and structural projects by the Jordanian Engineers Association. If a Jordanian consulting company lacks any of these specialisations, it can form a joint venture with another listed Jordanian consulting company to cover all required specialisations."
2. The delivery date of the proposals outlined in page 3 of the RFP is postponed to not later than 13:30 Wednesday, Feb. 7, 1990.
3. Interested Jordanian consultants are requested to advise their U.S. associates of this addendum.

Director/Government Tenders Directorate
Chairman of the Central Tenders Committee
Eng. Salem Qudah

Jordan Times

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جورديان تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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Jordan Times Advertising Department.

Winning people's hearts

THE government's plan of action, as presented to Parliament by Prime Minister Mudar Badran Tuesday, shows beyond any shadow of doubt that the prime minister and his government have reacted most positively to the contemporary concerns of the people of Jordan and reciprocated most favourably their aspirations and hopes. A fast glance at Prime Minister Badran's outline of his government's policies and priorities would readily reveal that he intends to extend a hand of cooperation to the newly elected Parliament and win its vote of confidence on the basis of his assured sympathy with and understanding of people's agonies and sentiments. By and large Badran's programme gives a lion's share to domestic ailments and sufferings. That is exactly what the people of the Kingdom have in mind in view of the multitude of hardships that they had to encounter in recent times whether economic or political. Suffice to recall that Prime Minister Badran has responded most positively and favourably to His Majesty King Hussein's directives and populist yearning for an end to the martial law regime in the country. While jurists may debate the full legal meaning and implications of the decision to "freeze" the application of martial law as distinguished from abolishing it, there is no doubt that the government is set on lifting martial law completely from Jordan's legal books in the most thorough legal manner possible, and in the shortest possible time. The prime minister deserves to be congratulated on his bold decision regarding this matter and for the extent that he is prepared to go to in eliminating the consequences of the application of martial law during the past years.

Equally important are the prime minister's appreciation and understanding of the concern of all citizens about corruption, especially in the public sector, and the rectification of past abuses of authority. In this vein the government's determination to pursue with vigour all past omissions or commissions that led to the near collapse of the country's economy is just music in the ears of the people. There has always been a general feeling that there were some people who milked the country dry over the past years and now is the time to ask questions and make those people accountable.

One can go on and on delineating the many salient features of the prime minister's policy statement. They include assurances on the freedom of the press; amendment or even cancellation of all legislations that are in conflict with the new spirit of liberalisation in the country; the on-going articulation of the National Pact on the basis of which political parties will be established; the investigation and elimination in due course of poverty from the ranks of Jordanians, to give only a few examples. What is perhaps more important and relevant is the spirit with which the government intends to pursue its goals. What shines out most brilliantly is the prime minister's desire to avoid confrontation with Parliament and to substitute that with meaningful dialogue and cooperation. For many Jordanians, Mudar Badran has already won the vote of confidence because he has already won their hearts.

JORDAN PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Arabic daily Wednesday discussed the policy statement of Prime Minister Mudar Badran as presented to Parliament on Tuesday to win a vote of confidence. The paper described the statement as comprehensive, covering all issues of concern to the public and clearly indicating that the government is determined to carry out a reform programme designed to restore democracy in the true sense of the word. The statement, read out to the deputies by Prime Minister Mudar Badran, did not only dwell on questions of interest to Parliament and the citizens of Jordan but rather dealt with issues that were believed by many as not yet ripe for discussion, the paper noted. It said that there is no exaggeration in saying that the new government has now set the stage for a long and intensive work aimed at continuing the task begun by the former Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and achieving the noble objectives in which the Jordanian people believe. Since the government is genuinely oriented towards carrying out reform and enhancing the democratic and parliamentary life, the paper said, the Jordanian people ought to respond favourably and undertake responsible action to help the government shoulder its heavy duty on all fronts.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily on Wednesday urged the Arab countries in general and the members of the Arab Cooperation Council in particular to follow the example of the European nations in their march towards achieving unity by the end of 1992. Fahd Al Fanek draws attention to the fact that the Europeans who initiated their economic cooperation in 1957, could not take a decision to fully integrate their countries before 1985, and made it clear that this process would not be possible to complete before the lapse of at least seven years. The writer also notes that the European countries unified their systems and regulations; and liberated themselves from restrictions in a slow and carefully planned stages. He says that over the past years, the heads of European governments faced numerous problems, but had been able to resolve many of them one by one, thus paving the ground for the full integration in the coming decade. Fahd Fanek criticises the contents of working papers prepared by the Arab Cooperation Council which propose immediate action leading to unity among Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and North Yemen. He says that the Arabs ought to take a lesson from the Europeans and take ample time to prepare for their unity.

Al Dastour daily newspaper hailed the policy statement of the government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran, referring in particular to its decision to freeze martial law prior to its final cancellation. This announcement made to Parliament by Prime Minister Mudar Badran is a very welcome step, long expected by the people of Jordan.

Campaigning for human rights in the Arab World

By Liesl Graz

"THE CONCEPT of human rights is a degenerate, Western imperialist notion," a Middle Eastern delegate thundered in a United Nations commission in Geneva a few years ago. Since then, for most Middle Eastern countries the rhetoric has changed; but with a few shining exceptions the reality has not. Take the difficulties faced by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) in trying to do its modest job. No Arab country would allow it to hold its first general assembly on its soil; now Tunisia has accepted the next assembly to be held in March 1990. The last one was in Sudan, but that, as AOHR's president, Adib al-Jadir, put it wistfully, "was before last July's coup." Recognition as an official observer organisation at the United Nations came, without much help or enthusiasm on the part of Arab governments, this year — after previous attempts were blocked.

AOHR headquarters are ostensibly in Cairo, but they have

no official status; the secretary-general, Muhammad Faig, is usually there but a second office has been established in Geneva, closer to the United Nations bodies concerned with human rights. Just as important is the fact that it exists, with duplicates of all the documents, ready to carry on, just in case...

AOHR grew out of a meeting of 100 Arab intellectuals called by the respectable Arab Centre for Unity Studies in 1983. "The point," as Mr al-Jadir, now president of AOHR, puts it, "was to see what had gone wrong with the dreams of the decades before." Another Arab observer, who prefers to remain anonymous, wryly notes, "that was the first act of courage, because Arab meetings are more prone to self satisfaction or self delusion than to looking at their own failings. The Israeli scapegoat was only too handy for explaining why revolutions didn't work, and blaming the legacy of colonialism was becoming a slightly worn excuse for why an inordinate number of the sovereign Arab countries ignored most of the civil rights of their own citizens."

That meeting, held in Cyprus because no Arab capital would have it, decided that talking about democracy in the Arab World was pointless without first doing something about human rights. Many brave people signed the first manifesto; the only ones who were excused from doing so, as being in a situation too dangerous for themselves and for their families, were the Iraqis present.

A movement of exiles

Not surprisingly, many of the active members of the AOHR are or have been political exiles: Iraqis form the largest contingent, along with Syrians, Libyans, Bahrainis and others. Not all human rights activists have to work abroad. Several Arab countries have more or less officially accepted branches of the AOHR: Algeria (after the riots of last October), Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan (until it was dissolved last July). Some tolerate them without giving official status; Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen each have over 100 members of the organisation and Mr. Al-Jadir says

that His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan have assured him that the Jordanian branch will soon have legal status.

The AOHR, like other human rights organisations, has a two-pronged programme: gathering and disseminating information on human rights violations and defending people who are detained. Its information gathering is complicated on the one hand by the fact that many people are afraid to come to it with details and on the other by the irresponsible attitude of some political opposition groups who give, if anything, too many details — not always paying attention to corroboration of facts. That is perhaps their role, but they often have difficulty accepting that AOHR refuses to publish or publicise any unverified information. AOHR is not a political party, not affiliated to any party or tendency (in some countries, notably Kuwait, it has members across the political spectrum, from leftists to fundamentalists).

Financially, it lives entirely on

subscriptions and donations from private individuals. The annual budget of \$150,000 is clearly inadequate but it feels it cannot accept support from any governmental sources. In that, it is even more independent than the Arab Lawyers' Union, with which it quite often cooperates.

On the credit side

AOHR believes in giving credit where credit is due. Its report for 1988 awards some points, among others, to Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania — for giving the Human Rights League permission to hold the first Maghreb conference on human rights — and Libya, for having released hundreds of political prisoners and allowing its citizens to travel abroad.

Libya provides a good example of what the AOHR is all about. Its overall human rights record has been deplorable — although not as systematically so as that of, for example, Iraq and Syria. Now a "Green charter on human rights" has been published and a Libyan human rights organisation asked to become a branch of

AOHR. The answer was that the charter was not bad as far it went, but still used authoritarian language and did not give enough guarantees. The branch was told to work as an autonomous organisation — and then, when it proved that it could work freely and investigate complaints independently, with its members harassed, the request for admission would be reviewed.

Some AOHR members have problems. In Kuwait, Dr. Saad Al-Sabah, poet, writer, member of the ruling family and of the AOHR executive committee, was placed under a press and broadcast ban. Some of AOHR's 50,000 subscription paying members and most of its major donors insist on anonymity. Mr. Al-Jadir, who has not returned to Iraq since his release from prison in 1969, is still basically an optimist. Now a retired international civil servant, he says he has no fear for his personal safety, but that it would be nice to be able to say the same for all those who want to speak out about the Arab World — Middle East International, London.

Chinese exiles work to keep democracy movement alive

By Kathy Wilhelm
The Associated Press

SOMERVILLE, Massachusetts — Six months ago, Chinese students around the world rallied by thousands and hastily formed aid committees after the bloody military crackdown on demonstrating classmates in Peking.

Today, foreign interest in their cause has waned, donations have fallen off and internal bickering over personalities and policy has hurt their credibility.

The exiled students watch wistfully as movements of the people sweep Eastern Europe's Communist parties from power and overshadow China's continuing crackdown.

Nonetheless, a core of activists, led by students who survived the June 3-4 violence in Peking are putting college and careers on hold, and exposing themselves and their families to political repression to organise a long-term fight for democracy for exile.

"It is our duty to speak before the whole world: Chinese people are suffering," said Li Lu, 23, one of only two students who escaped in June while on the Chinese government's most-wanted list of 21 students. He now studies economics at Columbia University in New York City but says his career will be fighting for human rights in China.

"I feel deeply guilty," said Li, pressing his hand to his heart. His wife, whom he married amid the bright student banners carried by protesters gathered at Tiananmen Square, remains in China.

In world history, exile groups have a poor record of achieving change at home. Prospects are especially bleak for the exiles from China, where many of the 1.1 billion people are semi-literate peasants with little awareness of events abroad.

"What we do here is limited," acknowledged An Wei, who came from Peking to study and now works part-time at the China Information Centre in the Boston suburb of Newton. The centre was set up in May to get news about Chinese political developments into and out of China.

"Any change (in China) will have to happen from within. But external pressure can have an impact," he said. "If we send in 100 faxes and only 10 get into the hands of concerned people, that will help."

Results may be slow in coming, said 21-year-old Wu'er Kaixi, the other key student leader to escape. He is studying at Harvard.

"We must wait for a good opportunity. It could be Deng Xiaoping's death or another student movement or changes in the military," he said. "When it comes, we have to be ready... to return in a minute to China and play a role."

Wu'er is one of the leaders of the Front for a Democratic China, founded in Paris in September and the most prominent of the overseas Chinese activist groups.

In an underheated apartment in an aging frame house in Somerville, just outside Boston, Wu'er and fellow Chinese students run the front's main U.S. office. They write speeches for his frequent public appearances, lobby for foreign sanctions against China and plot to spirit other dissidents out.

From dozens of makeshift offices and homes across the United States and abroad, other exile groups also churn out news releases and manifestos demanding democracy and smuggle anti-government materials into China.

A week ago, their goal of persuading foreign governments to pressure China on human rights was dealt a blow by the trip to Peking of U.S. national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and a White House aide, the first high-level American officials to visit since the killings in June. U.S. officials said the visit was meant to mend strained ties between the two governments.

But even before Scowcroft's visit, many activists said they were disappointed by the official American stance. The U.S. consulate in Hong Kong refused visas to many fleeing Chinese dissidents. U.S. President George Bush has vetoed bills that tried to

widen sanctions against China and allow students to remain in the United States indefinitely.

Next to their visa status, financing is the main worry of the Chinese groups, which share a scruffy, penny-patched look.

The China Information Centre is one of the better housed, in a two-storey frame house provided by a commercial religious group. It pays rent when it can.

The Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars, based in Washington, was formed by Chinese student groups on a number of campuses around the country. In Chicago, six Chinese students tape daily half-hour programmes of news and commentary that are broadcast into China on shifting frequencies as "the Voice of June 4."

The movement's only newspaper to date is the Press Freedom Herald in Los Angeles. Yan Zhongmei, a Chinese visiting scholar in Tokyo, has started a magazine, Democratic China.

Spiritual grandfather to all the groups is the Chinese Alliance for Democracy, formed seven years ago by a Chinese student defector. From a small apartment in New York City, the alliance publishes the anti-Communist magazine China Spring.

The alliance offers a sobering example to newcomers: Although it has found steady if sparse financial support and survived bitter internal splits, it can claim to have influenced only small groups of urban Chinese, despite efforts of underground members in China.

A more active role for non-alignment

The following interview with Dr. Esmat Abdul Meguid, deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Egypt is reprinted from the Belgrade-based Review of International Affairs.

Question: How do you assess the present situation in the world, a decisive characteristic of which is the process of understanding among the great powers?

Answer: We consider recent international developments especially superpower rapprochement and settlement of several regional issues as positive and welcome. Egypt, together with Yugoslavia, and India have dedicated their efforts since the Brijuni Conference of 1956 towards the achievement of world peace through détente and a just settlement of regional conflicts. This has hence become a main objective of the Movement of Non-Aligned States. The success of that process is in itself a vindication of the principles and policy of non-alignment.

Two aspects in these developments do, however, necessitate vigilance. The first is the fact that role of the developing countries especially within the Non-Aligned Movement vis-a-vis these developments has been marginal. The second is the fact that the positive impact of these developments did not encompass the deteriorating economic situation especially in the developing countries. We feel that, for détente to be solid and enduring, it should involve Third World countries and should encompass all issues of potential impact on world peace and stability. This definitely includes social and economic problems. Participation in the emerging evolution of international relations should therefore be a main goal of the Non-Aligned Movement in the near future. The movement, comprising more than two thirds of the world's community of nations, is by right entitled and capable of playing a more active role in the ensuring developments.

Question: What is your opinion on the state of international economic relations and, in particular, on the position of the developing countries and on the problems they confront, such as the debt problem and others?

Answer: There is a general consensus within the movement that economic issues are acquiring increasing importance and that problems of economic development head the priority consensus of its countries. In this field, we offer the following suggestions:

(1) NAM should consolidate its two-tier approach to this issue — first through the strengthening of collective self-reliance by concrete steps in the direction of enhanced South-South cooperation. There is need to review the Action Programme for Economic Cooperation to increase its effectiveness. The example of the Egyptian — Yugoslav — Indian tripartite cooperation is a model in this regard.

The second approach is to reactivate and revitalise North-South cooperation, adjusting to changes anticipated with the evolution in 1992 of the European unified market. This process should be based on open dialogue, mutuality of interests, and a constructive equitable attempt at solving all interrelated issues of money, finance, trade, debt and development. The four-nation initiative of Egypt, India, Senegal and Venezuela calling for a high level meeting of developing countries on economic issues offers, in our view, a practical approach to the revitalisation of North-South dialogue.

(2) Science and technology should henceforth figure high in the interest of the movement. Transfer of technology, especially from the developed countries has acquired great importance for ensuring rapid economic development.

(3) Increased focus on issues

related to the protection of the environment.

Question: In the process of the conversion of the world from a bipolar to a multipolar one, the circumstances in which the movement of non-alignment operates are changing as well. What, do you think, should be done to ensure that the movement of non-alignment performs its tasks and pursues its goals more effectively in the days to come?

Answer: Recent international developments offer new opportunities for the Non-Aligned Movement. They also confront it with new challenges. To start with, the principles of non-alignment remain as valid and relevant in the rapidly changing world scene. The movement should, however, adjust and adapt to these changes through an evolution of its methods of action and overall perceptions of international centres of political or economic power. This can only be achieved more effectively through dialogue with all grouping and key factors on the international scene based on a recognition of the increasing interdependence of interests.

The main task facing the movement now is how to ensure for itself a worthy role, as a representative of more than two thirds of the world population, in the shaping of events guaranteeing the interests of its member states. This could be achieved through more dynamism in its methods of work by offering practical and action-oriented initiatives. It should also free itself from the same cumbersome and lengthy documentation. Priorities have to be reviewed and coordination must be enhanced.

We, in Egypt, fully support Yugoslavia in its dedicated efforts to revitalise and reinvigorate the movement. We have great confidence in the ability of NAM under the chairmanship of your great country to give a fresh impetus and a new sense of purpose to the movement to meet the challenges ahead.

OPEN FORUM

A bird's eye view

IT IS interesting, sometimes funny, at times strange, and occasionally sad, what one notices around the city; things, little things really, that often go unnoticed, or are taken for granted. The list can go on and on. Let's look around and see what curiosity can lead us to.

— Have you noticed that at Shawarma stands a flat spoon is being used to spread tahini sauce into the sandwich? It definitely makes a small bowl of the already thinned out stuff go a long way.

— I've heard of people going out very early in the morning to buy a newspaper, but it is only lately that I've noticed a new phenomenon in Amman. Tomorrow's newspaper at 5 pm today! The deadline for reporters must be around 2 pm. They either think that nothing happens in the country, or the world for that matter, in the afternoon, or that this newspaper's reporters and editors can see into the future!

— Did you know that Queen Alia International Airport is really unique? Don't misunderstand me; I love to fly in and out of QALIA because I think it is one of the fastest airports in the world. It is the only airport that I am aware of where I can be home within less than one hour of the airplane touching down on the runway. It is also, unfortunately, the only airport that I know of that does not have some kind of a cafeteria where anyone awaiting the arrival of a flight can rest and perhaps have a cup of coffee.

— Now that Christmas is upon us, we can expect all those Christmas letters in computer printout form.

— Being rich is no longer a sin — these days it is a miracle.

— A minister had a nightmare recently — he dreamt that all the money he was going to spend was his!

— If God wanted us to pay income tax, he would have made us intelligent enough to fill out the forms.

— With the recent rise in prices we have finally achieved true democracy. For the first time in history, luxuries and necessities are selling at the same price.

— These days a car is worth at least ten human lives. If you don't believe it, check your car insurance policy.

— In some countries a "government employee" is called a "civil servant". I wonder why?

— It is so annoying when people call on the telephone, you answer, and the first thing they say is: "Who is this?" So many times instead of saying "Who do you wish to talk to?", I've felt like saying "It's none of your business".

— Recently, people have become so dependent on their calculators that it seems most have become incapable of performing the most simple arithmetic problems without one. Doing your arithmetic mentally can be such a good exercise for the mind everyone should try it.

— For some reason traffic policemen talk to people in the same manner that a drill sergeant talks to new army recruits. They don't ASK you to move your car, they ORDER you to do it. A little patience, a smile and a tiny bit of ORDER can go a long way.

— In case you haven't noticed, let me assure you that sidewalk trees. Trees seem to take up such a large portion of the sidewalk that there is no way anyone can walk on them comfortably. It is by the grace of God that not very many pedestrians get killed by cars because they are forced to walk on the street.

Magda Hamrah

Deported: The story of one Palestinian

Susan Qaddoumi interviews an exiled Palestinian in Cairo to find out why he was expelled.

ABDULLAH ABU SAMHADANEH, alias Abu Iyad, 39, was a member of one of the pro-Fatah popular committees in Gaza, now known as the General Command. A mathematics professor at the Islamic University, he was tortured and imprisoned by the Israeli Defence Forces for 10 months, and then expelled. He was charged with leading the Fatah Movement in Gaza, financing popular committees, and possessing grenades. On Jan. 2, 1989 he was taken from his Rafah home and transported by helicopter to the south of Lebanon. After a short spell in Sidon he made his way to Algiers, Tunisia and finally Cairo, where he is presently working with the Palestinian Embassy. Samhadaneh was separated from his wife and six children for five months until June, when, with the help of the Egyptian Ambassador to Israel, and various Arab members of the Knesset they were finally allowed leave. The ironic thing that none of the Israeli allegations are true. Let's start with the most obvious question: Why were you expelled? Simply because I'm Palestinian. In the old days especially during Hitler's time, the Jews used to say "Kashay la Yahood You-dee." (It is difficult to be a Jew.) Now we say it's difficult to be a Palestinian. Out of two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, why did the Israelis deport you? Someone else's word was enough. It's called "Tameer's Law." On the basis of a confession alone, that of an officer or someone who has been arrested, they can sentence you. In my case it was the brother of a colleague who went to Lebanon, and when he returned to Gaza and was arrested he said that I was the Fatah officer there. That was the reason for my expulsion. On the occasion of my imprisonment in 1984, someone was arrested who led a military uprising in Jabalya. Grenades were found and during interrogation he said I was their commander and supplier. There must be some truth to all of this. People involved with the coordination of the General Command were my friend and colleagues. All people living under the occupation were co-operating with each other and fighting together: Fatah, Hamas, Hawatme, Islamic Jihad...yes, they have some relationship with me but I was not a leader of Fatah. I was just a man living day to day under the occupation. Near the time of your deportation various members of the Islamic Jihad were expelled from

Gaza, for example Dr. Fathi Shkaggl, Sheikh Abdel Aziz Odi, Ahmad Mahanneh and Muhammad Abu Samra. What is your connection with them?

Inside the occupied territories we were tied by friendship, particularly in the beginning. Some lectured at the Islamic University with me... but after that when they became a real organisation in 1986 or 1987, I was in prison. Some of them were jailed along with me.

A few years ago the Islamic Jihad was successful in scoring a number of weapons coups off the Gaza coast. Do they sell any of these to Fatah?

The Islamic Jihad is a secret organisation. They work independently and don't share weapons.

During my last trip to Gaza I was told that it is possible to buy weapons from Israeli soldiers.

There have been many successful attempts to buy weapons from Israeli soldiers. They may sell for hashish or cocaine...many of them were ready to sell their weapons or to steal from their camps. They sold to anyone who would pay.

Is this special group or network of soldiers a general... General corruption. Most Palestinian weapons of the last seven or eight years are Israeli weapons.

You were in prison when the intifada broke out. What was your reaction?

The intifada was not a sudden event. It was a sudden event for

those people who are not within the occupied territories. We, especially those of us within its infrastructure were planning for such a date. The timing was early however. There had been clashes and waves in October, November, and December of 1987. We were expecting the intifada to begin inclusively on the first of January, on the anniversary of the establishment of the Fatah Movement in 1965. The lorry incident of Dec. 8, served as the intifada's early catalyst.

What is the origin of the intifada?

The intifada started in the early 1980's as a network of cells. We had a small intifada in Gaza in 1982, but our infrastructure was not strong, and we didn't have a unified leadership. We benefited by the experience however, and learned that the idea was to build a frame of people tied together and under order of the revolution.

Some say the intifada saved Yasser Arafat and the PLO from extinction. Arafat is a great leader who passed through many obstacles... the Jordan massacres in 1970, Tel Zatar in 1976, Sabra and Shatila in 1982, and Tripoli in 1983. Many thought 1982 would be the end. The PLO made the intifada, it was not the intifada which made the PLO. The intifada is a stream that pushed the PLO forward. In October (of 1987) on Monte Carlo Radio he said "wave after wave will continue," meaning that one day the



Abdullah Abu Samhadaneh and his family at his home in exile in Musr Geddida

intifada would be inclusive for all people.

What is your prognosis for the intifada?

It will continue until the establishment of a Palestinian state... at least the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with some line joining them.

Is this enough?

It is enough to have a Palestinian passport, I.D. card, and airport to transfer from when going to other countries, but first we need land...The Palestinian revolution has even asked for an identification card for Palestinians. We are expecting the future will give us self-determination and the establishment of a state, the rights of all the people in the world.

Pharaoh's village: The masterpiece of an Egyptian inventor

By Katia Sabet

CAIRO — In his kingdom, the water of the marshes seems to meld with the sky, offering refuge to wild birds and huge water lilies. Once past the gates, the visitor is transported into ancient Egypt, with young people dressed accordingly doing the work their ancestors used to do, watched by hieratic statues of the gods. Here the creator is 78-year-old Hassan Ragab. Under his guidance, the thickets of papyrus and weeping willows, along canals which are the playground of wild ducks. In a sudden rush of wings, a flight of geese all at once scatters. Ragab looks on, and around as if marveling for the first time at the oasis he perfected. A smile of pride crinkles a face tanned by years of work in the open.

vered the existence of paper from Chinese prisoners in Samarkand, they abandoned their papyrus technique to adopt the much cheaper and simpler method of using cellulose pulp. The papyrus plants were uprooted and the species disappeared. Explains Dr. Ragab: "First I went to Sudan to find Cyprus papyrus plants which I cultivated along the Nile next to my home — a floating house called Dahabeia. After just one year I had a sizable crop and I could start my experiments. Nowhere was there any indication on how our ancestors did it. Probably because it was a state monopoly and the secret was jealously guarded. Even the famous Roman author Pliny the Ancient gave some fantastic explanations of the process. I did not even know what part of the plant was used... I decided to go look at the old documents written on papyrus which are on display at the Paris Louvre museum and at the British museum, but it took me five years of failed essays and small successes before I was able to produce my first papyrus sheet — a carbon copy of the papyrus made thousands of years ago."

Despite the sweet taste of success, Dr. Ragab was appalled at finding his finances drained: threatened with total ruin he had the idea of having some paintings done on his papyrus sheets and offering them for sale at Cairo's Sheraton Hotel which had just opened not far from his house. The painted sheets were gone in a day, so he made more which went just as fast.

He started to sell the painted papyrus from his house, which almost capitalized one day under the weight of too many tourists. Yet he never advertised: only the grapevine guided clients to his Dahabeia.

Now the making of papyrus holds no secret: scores of small businesses are producing them and painted ones bearing ancient scenes or hieroglyphs are for sale all over Cairo, Alexandria and other touristic areas. The aquatic plant is collected for its stem whose central pith is cut into thin strips, pressed together and dried to form a smooth, thin writing surface. A whole province — the Charkeia — is cultivating papyrus.

"I realised one day that the area around my house could not produce enough papyrus to meet the demand," Dr. Ragab explained. "I asked the government to let me grow the plants on other lands, and that's how in the 1970s I started a plantation on a large scale on an island a few kilometres south of Cairo." Interested in other types of flora that had become extinct or were on the road to extinction, Dr. Ragab also planted joboba trees, tamarind trees, lotuses and water lilies.

"Attracted by the vegetation and the peacefulness, wild birds started to nest on the island, and soon I felt that an atmosphere pervaded that must be close to that of antique times. So why not complete the scenery by adding real-life scenes from the phar-

aohs' days?" This foray into tourism did not come out of the blue: in 1960 after leaving the diplomatic corps Dr. Ragab had taught at the Tourism Institute, and one of the ideas he had brought forward was the creation of a living museum where people in period dress would perform every day tasks. "I had no way to know that I would be the one to implement this project 22 years later," Dr. Ragab recalled with a smile. On the papyrus island the backdrop was already in place. What Dr. Ragab did was to dig canals to allow easy access, and to build some houses, temples, pigeon graineries and workshops. Everywhere in this man-made garden young men and women dressed like their ancestors go about their daily work: tilling, threshing wheat, sculpting wood,

building small boats using papyrus stems, and spinning and weaving linen whose tall stalks sway with the wind.

"We inaugurated the village in 1984," Dr. Ragab said, "and we are still adding new settings. About 1000 visitors come everyday, half of them schoolchildren and students."

Dr. Ragab's two business ventures — the Papyrus Institute and the Pharaohs' Village — employ about 300 people full-time, while artists and calligraphers who decorate the papyrus sheets are paid by the piece. Everything runs smoothly and with efficiency. The secret for success is simple, according to Dr. Ragab: "I just like to do things that nobody has done before." When a piece of equipment does not give him satisfaction, he fashions an improved one, for example the solar

compass he made for the Egyptian army in 1943 and which was used for many years.

Sometimes the instrument he needs does not exist, so he invents one, for example a machine to repair damaged papyrus sheets without leaving any marks. That won him the Rolex prize in 1984.

Since childhood Dr. Ragab has seen very different faces of Egypt: he remembers well the Egypt of the Khedives.

The problem with trying to get Dr. Ragab to talk about the past is that he has little interest in it, beyond stocking mementos. He is fully involved in the present and looks to the future for inspiration. Despite being hit hard by the death of his wife of 53 years about a year ago, he still looks ready to tackle anything — World News Link.

We lived in front of a pharaonic temple guarded by two watchmen holding spears. Ahead of us, Spanish tourists listen attentively to their guide, while other visitors amble around under rare trees, soaking in the atmosphere of the past and snapping photos. Further along, in an aristocratic home typical of the 13th century B.C., a rich lady puts on make-up with the aid of servant girls; the next house is a poor one: a woman bakes flat bread on a fire that her husband just lighted with an anti-gas lighter. The road that took Dr. Ragab from a graduation at Polytechnique with honours in 1933 to this village which is the perfect image of Egypt in the days of the pharaohs is strewn with more diplomas, inventions, diplomatic and military missions, and an in-depth study of the paper industry — in particular the art of making papyrus. Along a career that started in the military to veer into diplomacy and then into science, industry and tourism, Dr. Ragab received an impressive number of awards and honours, on the national and international level. The papyrus industry, which he reintroduced in Egypt, brings in about U.S. \$40 million for locally manufactured products. Dr. Ragab also found time to learn six languages — including Chinese and the hieroglyphic language of ancient Egypt — and to earn a sky-diving diploma at Fort Bragg, N.C., U.S.A. "I never expected that this papyrus business would become so important," Dr. Ragab says, "as if cursing himself. "At first I only wanted to make a few papyrus sheets to produce a small volume." The inspiration came from China, where he served as ambassador and where he had the occasion to see an old paper mill. The visit started him thinking about Egypt's traditional papyrus industry whose secret had been lost for a thousand years. Back in Egypt Dr. Ragab was confronted with two major problems: the papyrus plant had disappeared from the region, and the method used in ancient times to bind together the vegetal fibers had been lost. In the old days papyrus grew in abundance in the Nile delta marshes, but when Arabs disco-

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FAO warns of famine in Ethiopia

another decade. World population is increasing by some 80 million a year. By the year 2000 there will be more than six billion people to feed with 90 per cent of the increase in the developing world," he said.

another decade. World population is increasing by some 80 million a year. By the year 2000 there will be more than six billion people to feed with 90 per cent of the increase in the developing world," he said.

EC petrochemical producers such as Britain, West Germany and the Netherlands fear a flood of cut-price imports from a fledgling Gulf petrochemical industry. At the moment Gulf petrochem-

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Crude steel production by non-Communist nations decreased by 2.3 per cent in November from a year earlier, dropping by 908,000 tons to 39,035 million tons, the Brussels-based International Iron and Steel Institute said Wednesday. November output was also down 2 million tons from October. For the 11 months through November, output was up 7.8 million tons or 1.9 per cent to 442,323 million tons. U.S. and EC production were both lower, with the U.S. declining 4.9 per cent from a year earlier to 6.8 million tons. EC output dropped to 11,542 million tons, a drop of 4.3 per cent. Japanese output, however, rose by 1.1 per cent in November.

NEW YORK — Stocks rose on hopes by traders that the Federal Reserve's addition of money into the banking system indicated an easing of credit policy. The Dow was up six at 2,701.

JUMBLE.

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

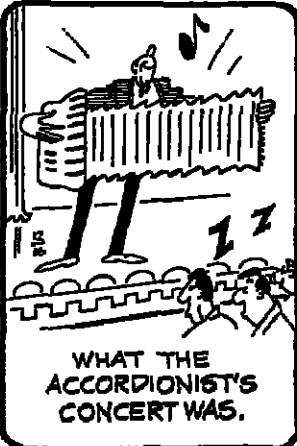
OOCCA

NIORB

DOFWYB

GLOAINO

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WHAT THE
ACCORDIONIST'S
CONCERT WAS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: OUT

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: NOVEL MINUS UPTOWN GULLET
Answer: Another name for money that's gained through **GOLDEN**

Row 1:

- Panel 1 (Peanuts):** Lucy Van Pelt, Charlie Brown, and Linus van Pelt are walking. Lucy says, "IT ALWAYS FEELS GOOD TO GIVE SOMETHING TO THOSE SANTAS WHO STAND ON THE CORNER". Charlie Brown says, "I AGREE".
- Panel 2 (Peanuts):** A Santa Claus character stands on a corner next to a small tree in a pot. A speech bubble from the tree says, "I AGREE".

Row 2:

- Panel 3 (Mutt'n' Jeff):** A tugboat is docked. A man in a hat says, "YOU KNOW HOW TUGBOATS TUG BIG OCEAN LINERS SAFELY TO THE DOCKS. WELL, THEY GET \$300 FOR THAT!". Another man in a hat says, "WELL, WHAT'RE WE WAITIN' FOR?".
- Panel 4 (Mutt'n' Jeff):** A large ocean liner is docked. A man in a hat says, "STRIKE BREAKERS!". Another man in a hat says, "ROW JEFF ROW!".

Row 3:

- Panel 5 (Andy Capp):** Andy Capp is walking down stairs. A speech bubble says, "FLIPPIN' CALLERS! UP AND DOWN -!".
- Panel 6 (Andy Capp):** Andy Capp is sitting on a chair, reading a newspaper. A speech bubble says, "RAT-A-TAT TAT-TAT!!".
- Panel 7 (Andy Capp):** Andy Capp is sitting on a chair, reading a newspaper. A speech bubble says, "RAT-A-TAT TAT-TAT!!".
- Panel 8 (Andy Capp):** Andy Capp is walking down stairs. A speech bubble says, "IF YOU WANT THE WORLD TO BEAT A PATH TO YOUR DOOR, JUST TRY TO MAKE YOUR BETS OUT!".

هكذا من اجل

Singh pledges to fight separatism

NEW DELHI (AP) — President Ramaswamy Venkataraman, outlining the policies of India's new government, said Wednesday there would be no compromises in tackling secessionist rebellions by Sikh and Muslim militants.

In a speech prepared by Prime Minister V.P. Singh's government, Venkataraman told a joint session of parliament that fresh efforts must be made to halt religious strife and corruption.

The president, whose post is largely ceremonial, also said India would retain friendly ties with both the Soviet Union and United States, seek to solve a border dispute with China and strengthen economic ties with Japan.

Singh, whose centrist National Front alliance took office after forging a coalition with Hindu right-wingers and secular Communists, listened attentively in the front row of the central hall of parliament.

Rajiv Gandhi, whose five-year tenure as prime minister ended in the November election debacle for his Congress Party, took notes.

Venkataraman, noting that voters had given "a clear verdict in favour of change," said the new government would strive to meet the challenges ahead.

"The Punjab problem has defied solution so far," he said, referring to the Sikh separatist movement that has claimed more than 7,000 lives in the past six years and triggered the 1984

assassination of Gandhi's mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

"There will be no compromise with separatism and no yielding to extremists, but there is admittedly a compelling need for a national endeavour to resolve the problem," the white-haired president said.

He said Singh's government would broaden the discussions it already has initiated on finding a political solution for Punjab, India's most prosperous farming state.

The nationally televised, 15-minute speech set out a course of action for government, but gave few specifics. It was delivered in the same parliament hall where India's independence was proclaimed at midnight on Aug. 14, 1947.

Turning to Kashmir, where pro-Pakistan Muslims want to secede from India, Venkataraman vowed, "There will be no compromise on the country's unity, sovereignty and integrity."

The two-week-old government of Singh, a Hindu, already has had its first serious challenge from Kashmiri militants. On Dec. 8, militants abducted the daughter of Home Minister Mufi Mohammad Sayeed, also a Muslim from Kashmir.

The young woman, a hospital intern, was released unharmed after six days when the government freed five Muslim extremists.

In a reference to communal riots that claimed more than 300

lives this fall in other states, the president said: "Violence has no place in the land of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence."

He was referring to Indian independence leader Mohandas K. Gandhi.

Venkataraman said that under Singh, whose chief campaign pledge was to eradicate government corruption, legislation would be introduced to appoint an ombudsman, or watchdog, whose jurisdiction would include the prime minister.

Rajiv Gandhi's government was hounded by accusations of corruption, epitomised by allegations that the Swedish arms manufacturer AB Bofors paid up to \$50 million in kickbacks to clinch a \$1.4-billion contract with India.

"Over the past few years, there has been a growing erosion of norms and values in public life," Venkataraman said. "The law will take its own course in respect of matters of corruption in high places."

He also said autonomy would be granted to state-run television and radio, which under Rajiv Gandhi devoted wide coverage to the governing congress party and little time to the opposition.

India will continue its policy of non-alignment while remaining friendly with both East and West, and work on "strengthening ties with our neighbours in South Asia," Venkataraman said.



Young Czechs showing the V-sign from the tram with Václav Havel's picture and posters stuck on the window.

Havel to become president

PRAGUE (R) — Playwright Václav Havel seems certain to become Czechoslovakia's president next week.

Parliament decided to choose a new head of state before the end of the year and its steering committee called a session for Dec. 29 when the election will take place.

The committee said the meeting would be held not in the parliament building but in the Vladislav Hall of Prague Castle, seat of Czechoslovakia's head of state, the official news agency CTK said.

The hall is traditionally the place where presidents are elected. In earlier times, the kings of Bohemia were crowned in the hall.

Havel's election became certain after Prime Minister Marian Calfa and other leading communists endorsed his candidacy during parliament's session Tuesday.

"It does seem that I am the

likely person to be elected," said Havel, central figure of the opposition which in the past month has forced through democratic reforms and ended the Communist Party's monopoly on power.

"I followed today's broadcast from the federal assembly and it seems every other deputy was suggesting me as president," Havel told a news conference.

"Some of these people are very unlikely to me."

Even hardline Communists, for whom Havel was a despised nobody little more than a month ago, admitted their constituents were so overwhelmingly in favour of Havel that they would vote for him.

No other name was heard as a possible presidential candidate during a nine-hour session of the federal assembly which also unanimously approved the pro-

visional programme of Calfa's government.

The parliament accepted, also unanimously, a motion to extend the time limit for choosing a successor to President Gustav Husak, who resigned nine days ago, from 14 to 40 days.

But, deciding that the assembly would elect a president rather than put the matter to a referendum, deputies also stressed that the election should take place before the end of the year.

Parliament will choose the president publicly, not by secret ballot, and the new head of state's term of office will end after free parliamentary elections.

Havel has repeatedly said he wants to lead Czechoslovakia only until its first free elections for more than 40 years — and these should take place by the middle of 1990.

British MPs okay return of boat people

LONDON (AP) — Legislators have endorsed Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's controversial policy of forcibly repatriating Vietnamese from Hong Kong and the government indicated the deportations of boat people will resume.

The 309-219 vote in the House of Commons Tuesday came after an acrimonious three-hour debate in which opposition legislators accused the Conservative Party government of bringing shame and international disgrace on Britain.

London suspended forced repatriations to allow for the parliamentary debate after the first deportations — 51 Vietnamese bundled on to an aircraft in the early hours of Dec. 12 — provoked an international outcry.

"It was a decision that gave pleasure to none and, I acknowledge, has caused anxiety to many," Foreign Office Minister Francis Maude told the Commons Tuesday night.

But he said the burden of 57,000 boat people now in Hong Kong holding camps and the prospect of thousands more arriving when the sailing season begins in the spring had become intolerable.

All but 13,000 have been classified as economic migrants seeking a better way of life, not political refugees with a right to asylum.

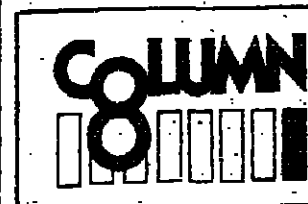
"For those of us who do have those responsibilities, they cannot be dodged, they cannot be shirked and we won't shirk them," Maude said, indicating forced repatriations will resume. He gave no date.

"Of course the United States has been critical. There are historical reasons for this. But... they have had no realistic alternative to propound," Maude added.

Meanwhile, the government faced another storm with an announcement due Wednesday on the number of Hong Kong Chinese who will be given residence rights in Britain after China takes over the colony in 1997.

Leaks from government officials put the total at about 225,000 of the 3.25 million Hong Kong Chinese who now have British passports but no residence rights.

The move is intended to cover about 50,000 key government employees and entrepreneurs and their families needed to maintain the British administration and the territory's capitalist system.



Naked man shot in Bonn

BONN (R) — A naked man charged through the streets of Bonn Tuesday and was shot and wounded when he tried to force his way into the U.S. ambassador's residence. Police said the unnamed 25-year-old Senegalese-born Frenchman lost his temper after a row with his West German girlfriend. He peeled off his clothes and ran through the streets in broad daylight. After unsuccessfully trying to rob an old woman, the man climbed over a wall into the garden of U.S. envoy Vernon Walters. His way was blocked by a guard as he ran up the steps to the residence and he was shot in the leg during a struggle. Police said they were still investigating the incident.

Japanese suicide sub discovered

ANTANANARIVO (R) — Divers have found one of two Japanese suicide submarines which went missing off the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar during World War II, state-run Radio Madagascar said. A team of experts and divers from Japan and Madagascar found the 24-metre-long submarine in the Bay of Antsiranana (formerly called Diego Suarez) at the northern tip of Madagascar last weekend, the radio reported. The submarines were deployed in the area in May, 1942, to attack French and British warships. Their two or three-man crews were supposed to use the vessels as piloted torpedoes to ram enemy warships on suicide missions. The vessel, found in nine metres of water, was recognised as Japanese by its propeller markings, the radio said. It did not give details of the state of the vessel or say whether the remains of the crew had been found inside. The search team, which included a relation of one of the missing crew, was hunting for the other missing submarine in the bay, the radio added.

Good Samaritan robbed on beach

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A former army medic who tied in vain to rescue a drowning man returned to shore with the body and found that his wallet had been emptied of cash. Ronald Morgan, 28, said he heard a commotion in Johannesburg's Rhodes Park Monday afternoon and saw more than a dozen people watching passively as a man was drowning in the middle of a lake. "It took me five minutes to get him to shore," Morgan told the Star newspaper. "He was already blue — that's how long people stood and watched. The worst thing of all was when I looked in my wallet, which I left behind when I went in, and 100 rand (\$39) was missing — I lost all faith in humanity." A police spokesman, Capt. Eugene Opperman, Tuesday praised Morgan's rescue attempt and said the drowned man, who may have committed suicide, had not been identified.

Buchwald in court

LOS ANGELES (R) — Humourist Art Buchwald, who claims Paramount Studios used his ideas for the Eddie Murphy hit film "Coming to America," told a court his property was stolen and "traced." He said at first he didn't know what to do about it because "it is very hard for a so-called humourist to be taken seriously." Buchwald, a Washington columnist, has sued Paramount Pictures Corporation for \$5 million, claiming the film, in which Murphy played an African prince who went to the United States and found a wife, was based on a story he wrote.

Global weather

(major world cities)

	MIN.	MAX.	Weather
AMSTERDAM	10	17	50 Rain
ATHENS	10	17	63 Cloudy
BANGKOK	14	27	80 Clear
Buenos Aires	22	28	81 Clear
CAIRO	10	24	75 Clear
CHICAGO	-15	05	15 Clear
COPENHAGEN	01	34	50 Cloudy
FRANKFURT	05	43	11 Clear
GENEVA	07	45	18 Cloudy
HONG KONG	21	28	81 Cloudy
ISTANBUL	10	18	61 Clear
LONDON	04	39	45 Cloudy
LOS ANGELES	12	54	19 Clear
MADRID	05	43	12 Clear
MEXICO	21	28	81 Cloudy
MONTREAL	21	32	80 Clear
MOSCOW	04	14	54 Clear
NEW DELHI	08	46	21 Cloudy
PARIS	08	46	14 Clear
ROME	08	46	14 Clear
STOCKHOLM	18	61	19 Clear
TOKYO	19	28	82 Clear
VIENNA	04	39	12 Clear
	08	43	14 Clear

M - indicates missing information.

Kohl dismisses 'fourth reich' fears

DRESDEN (Agencies) — West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl Wednesday dismissed as "absurd" fears that reunification with East Germany would create an evil empire.

Kohl, during a news conference closing a triumphant two-day visit, also said he expects a treaty expanding bilateral ties to be completed before East Germany's first free elections next May.

Kohl added: "Fears based in the past are understandable, but there is nothing to be feared from the future. It's absurd to talk about a fourth reich."

East German Communists and other opponents of reunification have said joining the two states could create a "fourth reich," and reminded people about the atrocities of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

The chancellor pledged to take into account the concerns of other European countries, as the two German states move closer together.

"It's the most natural thing that Germans want to live together," Kohl said. "But we all know that it cannot come immediately."

Earlier, he met with two Roman Catholic bishops and opposition representatives as well as Dresden Mayor Wolfgang Berger, a popular Communist reformer.

An East German Lutheran church leader told a West German radio station that the Com-

munist country could slip into anarchy, but cited positive signs in Kohl's visit to Dresden.

West Germany's Bild Newspaper said Wednesday the Berlin Wall would be opened at the city's famed Brandenburg Gate Friday.

At Tuesday's summit meeting, Kohl and Communist Premier Hans Modrow agreed that East Germany would open the wall at the historic Brandenburg Gate before Christmas.

The two sides also signed several agreements and pledged to negotiate the treaty to bring them even closer together, especially by expanding economic links.

President Francois Mitterrand of France, who is closely following German developments, was expected to arrive later Wednesday in East Berlin. He was to meet Modrow and other top East German officials during a three-day visit.

Spy swap

East Germany will free 24 convicted West German spies before Christmas in exchange for four agents held in West German jails. West German sources said Wednesday.

The sources in Kohl's delegation for his visit to Dresden said East Berlin agreed to the deal in exchange for Bonn's pardoning of two former government secretaries jailed for espionage.



Manuel Noriega

Noriega — 'MAN' thumping his nose at U.S.

PANAMA CITY (AP) — General Manuel Antonio Noriega has been a shrewd survivor who thumped his nose at what he called "the Colossus of the North."

He eliminated political opposition, nullified the May 7 elections when they were going against him and repeatedly defied the United States, which indicted him on drug trafficking charges in February 1988.

Noriega, who comes from El Chorrillo, the Panama City district where Panama Defence Forces (PDF) headquarters is located, has survived and created a mystique that won him the nickname "the Man," the English world his initials spell.

Noriega wrapped himself in nationalism, saying it was part of the historic mission of his generation to take control of the Panama Canal. Under an accord with the United States, Panama is to take over the canal by the year 2000.

Noriega claimed his enemies were plotting to abrogate the canal pact.

On Oct. 3, elements of the 15,000-man PDF he commanded rebelled and claimed they had deposed him, but troops loyal to him suppressed the rebellion and he personally accepted the rebels' surrender.

During his last crisis in May after the opposition swamped his candidate the annulled presidential elections, Noriega was seen standing alone before the tomb of his patron, General Omar Torrijos.

The epitaph on the tomb is: "I don't want to enter heaven. I just want to enter the canal zone."

Torrijos, who seized power in a 1968, signed the 1977 accord with former President Carter to turn over the canal.

Torrijos died in a plane crash in 1981, and Noriega became commander of the PDF in 1983, giving him de facto control of the government.

Sotheby's reports record annual sales

LONDON (R) — Sotheby's, the world's largest art auctioneers, said Tuesday contemporary and impressionist works helped to boost its worldwide sales to a record \$2.93 billion this year.

In a statement released in London, Sotheby's Holdings Inc. said sales were 61 per cent higher than its previous record of \$1.8 billion in 1988.

"Sotheby's growth this year is most dramatically illustrated in the areas of contemporary and impressionist art," said Michael Ainslie, president and chief executive.

Sotheby's more than doubled to \$797 million its sales of impressionist, contemporary and modern art during the autumn season compared to

sales in the same period a year ago.

Masterpieces such as Picasso's self-portrait "Yo Picasso," brought in \$47.9 million and his "Au Lapin Agile" was sold for \$40.7 million. The prices were the third and fourth-highest paid for a work of art sold at auction.

"There were excellent results for both departments in New York and London with a world record total of \$269.5 million set at the New York sale of impressionist and modern art on Nov. 15," Ainslie said.

Auction of single-owner collections, such as the John T. Dorrance, collection in New York, was one of the most significant factors contributing to Sotheby's success, he said.

FBI probes 'declaration of war' on court

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) agents are investigating whether a letter declaring war on a U.S. district court in the city of Atlanta is connected with two fatal mail bombings in other parts of the southeastern United States.

The U.S. Justice Department says the bombings may be racially motivated.

The unsigned letter declaring war on the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta was received Aug. 24 by WAPT-TV in Jackson, Mississippi, the station reported Tuesday night.

Typed in capital letters, the letter may be an important clue in the FBI-led investigation of parcel bombs that killed a member of the appeals court, Judge Robert S. Vance, and Robert E. Robinson, an alderman and civil rights lawyer from Savannah, Georgia.

Attorney General Dick Thornburgh said in a statement Tuesday that the investigation was focusing on the possibility that race motivated the killings and the sending of similar package bombs to the 11th Circuit Court

and the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) in Jacksonville, Florida.

Vance ruled in favour of the Jacksonville chapter of the NAACP, a national civil rights group, on Sept. 15 in a school desegregation case.

The letter bore an Atlanta postmark dated Aug. 21, the day before a tear-gas canister exploded in Atlanta's NAACP office, injuring eight people.

The letter threatened poison gas attacks on large cities to force the court to "adopt fair and impartial treatment of all."

Entitled "Declaration of war," the letter said the 11th Circuit Court of appeals "does deliberately and wrongfully refuse to fulfill its obligation to protect the innocent."

"The court's failure to render impartial and equitable judgments is due to rank bias and the mistaken belief its victims cannot effectively retaliate," the letter said.

The television station in Jacksonville, the capital of the state of

Mississippi, said it immediately turned the letter over to the FBI. FBI spokesman Charles Steinmetz confirmed that the bureau has been investigating the letter since receiving it from the station.

Three weeks after the letter surfaced, the 11th Circuit published Vance's opinion for the unanimous three-judge panel in the school case in the state of Florida. It reversed a lower-court ruling that Jacksonville schools could stop busing to achieve racial integration.

On Saturday, Vance was killed in his Mountain Brook, Alabama, home after opening a parcel mailed to him.

On Monday, a similar bomb was found at the 11th Circuit Courthouse in Atlanta and removed without incident. Hours later, Robinson was fatally injured in his Savannah law office when he opened the parcel mailed to him.

On Tuesday, authorities found a similar bomb at the office of the Jacksonville NAACP, which brought the school case.

"It was designed to kill the

individual that opened this package or anyone else standing in the area," said Jacksonville Sheriff Jim McMillan.

"It had a great similarity in the packaging to the other bombs," said Willi Ellison of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. "It was addressed to no one specifically, but to the legal staff of the NAACP."

FBI Director William Sessions told reporters Tuesday he would not be surprised if the Vance murder was related to cases he had worked on as a federal appellate judge.

Sessions said Vance's court docket would be carefully studied to determine if his rulings may have sparked a racially motivated murder.

Sessions said investigators found no similarities between the bombings and attempted bombings and the actions of extremist white groups, but "it is something you cannot rule out."

"We would hope the patterns of these types of groups when studied carefully and compared will yield fruit," Sessions said.

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